Between local governments and communities

Knowledge exchange and mutual learning in Dutch-Moroccan and Dutch-Turkish municipal partnerships

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Citation for published version (APA):

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6. Knowledge exchange and learning; methods and types of knowledge and kinds of learning

6.1. Introduction
This chapter addresses the following key questions: (1) what kinds of knowledge are exchanged; (2) how do local governments and the other actors involved in municipal partnerships exchange knowledge (i.e. which methods and strategies); and (3) which type of learning is taking place within these partnerships? In the assessment of processes of knowledge exchange, part A will focus on learning in Morocco and Turkey, while part B will analyse learning in Dutch municipalities. In both parts learning at the local government level (i.e. local government as an organizational unit) is first addressed, followed by examination of learning by other actors (particularly NGOs).

In my analysis of processes of knowledge exchange and learning, I have argued that, in discussing possibilities for knowledge exchange in C2C partnerships, one has to recognize what types of knowledge exist as well as the models within which different types of knowledge are produced and disseminated (see Van Ewijk and Baud 2009). The classic linear model of knowledge dissemination is associated with the 'transfer of knowledge and technology' from the Global North to the Global South. This model assumes that codified knowledge in the North is 'universally applicable' and can be distributed globally. This type of model has been criticized as it ignores the context in which knowledge is produced and the associated limits for its dissemination (cf. Rip 2001; De la Rive Box 2001; Baud 2002). Alternative models assume that knowledge production and dissemination is based on interaction between researchers, people and organizations (all seen as sources and users of knowledge). Different types of knowledge (ranging from tacit to embedded and generalized knowledge\textsuperscript{110}) are exchanged through various methods. Knowledge in the framework of municipal partnerships can be exchanged in various ways: (1) peer-to-peer exchanges between colleagues working on a particular subject; (2) meetings and workshops organized by local governments; (3) field visits to places and organizations of thematic interest; (4) conferences and other events organized by third parties (usually local government associations); (5) training courses targeting multiple local government stakeholders (e.g. support programmes such as MATRA and LOGO East); and (6) translated written documents (adapted from Bontenbal 2010: 466-467). Learning includes single-loop and double-loop learning, formal and informal learning, and intended and unintended learning.

\textsuperscript{110} As discussed in chapter two, tacit knowledge is internalized by people; it concerns ways of doing things which people often are not aware of. In contrast, codified and generalized knowledge 'has been explicitly and systematically expressed' (King and McGrath 2004). This knowledge is also referred to as universal knowledge; it is documented and therefore more widely accessible than tacit knowledge. Embedded or implicit knowledge is embedded in a certain context and refers to knowing what is socially and culturally appropriate in a given circumstance (Verkoren 2008: 80).
In this chapter I analyse different kinds of knowledge, methods of exchanging knowledge, as well as various types of learning in the case studies. As described in the methodological overview in chapter 3, the processes of knowledge exchange and learning were analysed in exchange projects primarily initiated a few years prior to when the interviews were carried out. During the research phase most of these programmes were ongoing, with some nearing their final stage. In addition, interviews were also conducted with respondents involved in ‘general exchanges’ (i.e. not clearly linked to support programmes). The research did not include a systematic analysis of all Dutch-Moroccan and Dutch-Turkish municipal partnerships. A few interesting examples from other municipal partnerships are presented throughout the text in separate text boxes as illustrations of these exchanges.

**Part A: Morocco and Turkey**

6.2. Knowledge exchange and learning; governance processes in Turkish and Moroccan municipalities

Programmes related to strengthening local governance in Morocco and Turkey have been central in most municipal partnerships. The main kind of programmes are (1) improvement of waste management systems in Emirdag (Turkey), Berkane (Morocco) and Al Hoceima (Morocco); (2) knowledge exchange on fire safety, disaster management and hazardous materials between the firefighting departments of Kocaeli (Turkey) and Amsterdam (the Netherlands); (3) knowledge exchange on preservation of cultural landmarks between Kocaeli and Amsterdam; (4) cooperation on various subjects (e.g., camera supervision) between the police departments of Casablanca (Morocco) and Rotterdam (the Netherlands); and (5) promotion of youth participation in local governance in Berkane and Al Hoceima, through their exchanges with Zeist and Meppel respectively. Nearly all programmes were supported by national support programmes—except for the cooperation between the police departments in Rotterdam and Casablanca, which was financed by the police department of Rotterdam.\textsuperscript{111} In some cases no specific programmes were formulated (e.g., the general exchanges between the police departments in the Meppel–Al Hoceima and Zeist-Berkane partnerships). In other cases projects for cooperation were just being established (e.g., through cooperation with Amsterdam, Kocaeli established a department to deal with international relations). The focus of this section is on learning in local governance processes, whereby in some cases local governments cooperated with NGOs. This applies particularly to private waste management companies involved in projects focusing on waste management.

\textsuperscript{111} From the onset of the programme the international exchange with migrant source countries was regarded by the police department of Rotterdam as an important way for learning from cultural diversity.
6.2.1. **Methods of exchanging different types of knowledge**

In most municipal partnerships different methods of exchanging knowledge were used. First of all, meetings and workshops were organized which mainly included thematic presentations by experts. These exchanges were particularly important for obtaining more generalized and theoretical knowledge about particular topics as well as codified knowledge about the context (e.g. country-specific information). In some cases workshops were criticized for being too theoretical. Another limitation mentioned by officials was that the seminars alone were not sufficient for obtaining a full understanding of the Dutch context. The officers expressed that they only realized the importance of the Dutch context once they visited the Netherlands personally (see also 6.2.2). In most exchange programmes, seminars and conference were also held at the end of projects, which were important for knowledge dissemination as many stakeholders (local government, civil society and private sectors) participated in these events. Field visits to the Netherlands were organized for all projects, except for the exchange on youth participation. These field visits were particularly useful because they exposed the participants to other types of practices and provided insight into the Dutch context. Through field visits tacit and embedded knowledge was made more explicit. In projects on youth participation, joint seminars in Morocco were held, during which groups of youth directly exchanged experiences. The main focus was on strengthening the capacity of youth organizations in Berkane and Al Hoceima, and stimulating youth participation in local governance issues.

In addition peer-to-peer, on-the-job learning was another important mechanism. This was particularly strong in projects on waste management, fire safety and police matters. Some firefighters from Kocaeli, for example, were invited to follow general Dutch training courses along with their Dutch colleagues. Dutch firefighters also joined their Turkish colleagues in the field when they were called out to combat a reported fire. In peer-to-peer learning, face-to-face contacts were essential in facilitating the exchange of embedded implicit and tacit knowledge. The exchange of knowledge also occurred outside the more structured and formal exchange settings. During trips, lunches and in the evening hours the participants also exchanged knowledge related to work practices.

Outside the scope of face-to-face contacts, limited knowledge was exchanged through other means, such as email and telephone. Especially in the exchanges between Dutch and Moroccan peers, communication through email and telephone was scarce, due to the language barrier, limited access to internet facilities in Morocco and the differences in work practices (compared to Dutch professionals, Moroccan professionals hardly use the internet for communication).\(^{112}\)

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\(^{112}\) In Berkane all email messages had to go through a lengthy administrative procedure. Emails were received by the officer responsible for communication, printed, stamped and recorded in the central registration system. Then they were delivered to the mayor, who reviewed each email and subsequently passed it on to the person responsible.
Box 6.1 Retrieving generalized knowledge

A policy advisor from the Municipality of Amsterdam and a Dutch consultant of Moroccan descent mentioned an interesting example whereby generalized knowledge was retrieved. In the preparation for an exchange visit of Amsterdam artists to Fez, the Amsterdam artists sought out information on traditional Fez decoration patterns in Dutch libraries. They made copies of the materials and brought them to Fez. Interestingly, the artists in Fez were not aware of these traditional patterns (they had been forgotten through the decades) and were very keen to learn them again.

Generally the main types of knowledge exchanged included both tacit knowledge as well as contextual/embedded knowledge (mostly technical). Exchange of codified knowledge also occurred, mainly on technical issues such as working with firefighting equipment. In the exchange between the departments for preservation of cultural landmarks and fire safety (Amsterdam-Kocaeli), generalized knowledge was translated and disseminated (for instance brochures on community safety and fire control as well as equipment manuals). In a programme focused on involving men in projects on domestic violence, the health department of the municipality of Rotterdam translated a document about the project set-up into French. Only in one case, the Haarlem-Emirdag exchange on waste management and environmental awareness raising, a knowledge centre, the University of Afyon, was involved. Table 6.1 presents an overview of the different methods of exchanging knowledge in the main projects focusing on strengthening local governance in Morocco and Turkey. The table also shows the types of knowledge being exchanged.
Table 6.1 Methods, extent and kinds of knowledge exchanged (focus on Moroccan and Turkish local governments)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exchange themes</th>
<th>Waste management</th>
<th>Fire safety and Hazardous material</th>
<th>Cultural heritage preservation</th>
<th>Police departments</th>
<th>Youth participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Methods of exchanging knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer-to-peer and on the job</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mostly</td>
<td>Tacit and embedded knowledge</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Mainly embedded</td>
<td>Mainly tacit and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>embedded</td>
<td>(mostly technical)</td>
<td></td>
<td>knowledge</td>
<td>embedded knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings and workshop</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Generalized and embedded</td>
<td>Generalized and</td>
<td>Generalized and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Generalized and</td>
<td>and embedded knowledge</td>
<td>embedded knowledge</td>
<td>embedded</td>
<td>embedded knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>embedded</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field visits</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>(no info)</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mostly</td>
<td>Tacit and embedded knowledge</td>
<td>(no info)</td>
<td>Mainly embedded</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>embedded</td>
<td>(mostly technical)</td>
<td></td>
<td>knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences and other events</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint trainings</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Mainly embedded technical</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>knowledge</td>
<td>knowledge</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written documents</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Generalized technical</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>knowledge</td>
<td>knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2.2. **Different forms of learning**

The exchange of knowledge was particularly relevant for learning practice-based embedded knowledge and for learning regarding organizational processes, such as organizing a project and the modalities for cooperation with other actors.

**Learning practice-based embedded knowledge on service delivery**

The majority of respondents from the participating Moroccan and Turkish cities who visited the Netherlands emphasized the importance of being able to directly observe local practices in the Netherlands. Especially the participants in the programmes on waste management highlighted this strength. Most professionals were well educated and had already obtained generalized knowledge during their studies at university; however, they lacked practice-based knowledge, as testified by a young female environmental engineer at Afyon Province (Turkey):

*I can’t say that my knowledge about environmental management has improved, because I already knew the regulations in our country. I think they are more than enough, and there is no difference with the regulations in Europe. However, we learned a lot from the Netherlands when it comes to practice.*
Exposure to another context was a very effective way to introduce participants to new ideas, new techniques and increase their awareness of the issue. With this new knowledge, the professionals had more options for selecting different methods to use in their daily work. An environmental engineer based in Afyonkarahisar shared her view regarding a technical exchange:

When we went to Holland we already had our own project, regarding solid waste, but to see it there was more effective for me. I had the chance to compare the techniques used in two different countries and saw better practices that I thought would be good to apply here [in Afyon] as well as in Holland.

The president of the waste management company in Al Hoceima (Morocco), who visited waste management systems in the Netherlands, emphasized the importance of being able to see different practices in person—not only being taught through formal instruction:

We don’t have the same system because we throw it away and don’t use it. We don’t extract energy from the ‘soil’. It is all waste. ...How can I know all these things if I had not been to the Netherlands? Something that you see with your own eyes you never forget...instead of just hearing it. They put waste underground! I will never forget it!

A few respondents mentioned that the field visits to the Netherlands were relevant for increasing their awareness about current broader environmental issues. This was mentioned in the exchanges on waste management and the preservation of cultural landmarks. In the words of a former policy officer from the Municipality of Emirdag, ‘Exposure to the Netherlands helped [us] make a vision...how we have to treat [the waste]. The recognition that waste can pollute underground water, the environment...really affected me.’ Similarly, the former mayor of Al Hoceima mentioned that the exchange with the Netherlands, as well as exchanges with their Belgian partners (Schaarbeek-Brussels), significantly contributed to improvements in their waste management system.113 The past practice was to simply dump all waste into the Mediterranean Sea; today it is collected every day and transported to a controlled waste disposal site.

The exposure to the Netherlands was an important tool that helped Moroccan and Turkish professionals better understand the Dutch context (including cultural characteristics, government arrangements, geographical characteristics etc). Having only guest Dutch lectures hold trainings on selected topic in the partner municipalities had only limited learning effects as participants missed knowledge on the specific Dutch context. With personal exposure, Moroccan and Turkish professionals were able to link

113 Most local governments in Morocco and Turkey had multiple partnerships with European local governments, but in most cases they did not cooperate on similar themes. Only respondents from Al Hoceima referred to the possibility of building up a knowledge base on waste management through contacts with various international partners.
the new knowledge to the context which it came from. This was important for exploring how this knowledge could be used in another location. A municipal officer from the health department of Berkane, for instance, explained that his visit to the Netherlands was important for obtaining a better understanding of the Dutch context (e.g., high population density, high labour prices and the detailed examination of the composition of waste). These factors were important for understanding Dutch policy choices, such as, the very strict environmental regulations and the preference for incineration of solid waste. Seeing Dutch practices with their own eyes was also important for participants in the fire safety exchange, particularly in relation to the population density, the kind of buildings and the availability of water sources. Also in the exchanges between police departments, the visit to the Netherlands provided for better understanding of the context of the work of the police department.

Learning regarding organization and processes

The majority of respondents mentioned that learning on processes was the most important kind of learning. They referred to internal processes (e.g., the way services are embedded within the municipal department) as well as external processes (cooperating with non-governmental actors). This section will briefly discuss internal organizational learning, while section 7.3 will discuss the interfaces between governmental and civil society actors.

A clear example of learning regarding the internal organizational set-up occurred in Kocaeli, where a Historical Environments and Urban Aesthetics Department was set up and lessons were drawn from Amsterdam. The director of the municipal heritage department in Kocaeli highlighted the many differences between Kocaeli and Amsterdam—especially the materials used for constructions and the ownership of landmarks—but he also highlighted that he learned a lot about how things are organized in Amsterdam:

I saw that having a functioning unit [on preservation of landmarks] within the body of the municipality can help a lot in the preservation efforts. That is so important. And also the work they do [in Amsterdam] in terms of awareness was very important.

At the moment the research was carried out, the Municipality of Kocaeli also initiated plans to establish an international desk for future collaborations which was based on the practices in Amsterdam. Learning about the organizational set-up was also a priority for the police department of Casablanca. The international coordinator from the police department mentioned that the department was in the process of setting up a subunit on crisis management, based on what was learned in the exchange with Rotterdam.

In the exchange focusing on youth participation the policy officer in charge of youth affairs in Berkane mentioned she came in contact with the various youth organizations and increased her knowledge about their activities. This will also be discussed in chapter 7.
Generally speaking, the extent of learning regarding the municipal organizational set-up was limited in the partnerships Haarlem-Emirdag, Zeist-Berkane and Meppel-Al Hoceima. In these partnerships specific cooperation projects had a central position. In the cooperation Zeist-Berkane and Meppel-Al Hoceima the main focus was on waste management and youth participation; there was hardly any learning regarding the municipal organizational set-up. Respondents in Berkane, including the former mayor as well as several policy officers, indicated that they were eager to learn more about the organizational set-up of the Municipality of Zeist, because they saw weaknesses in their own organization and felt that there were valuable lessons they could apply.

**Disposition and other forms of learning**

Dispositional learning—learning about attitudes and values—also occurred. This learning took place mostly as an unintended side-effect, as it was not part of the learning objectives in the support programmes and was therefore not assessed. Several respondents mentioned that participating in the partnership increased their motivation in their own work. The environmental engineer of the Environmental Union of Municipalities in Afyon Province mentioned, ‘In the Netherlands people work hard; when they start something they finish it. This really motivated me in my own work.’ Another project member added, ‘I have learned how to be more practical. I have learned more about planning and programming.’

Several respondents in Berkane also mentioned the cooperation was a motivating factor in their own work and the work of their collaborators. The director from the NGO SSR, who has been involved in the exchange processes between the municipalities of Zeist and Berkane for several years, shared his experience:

It is stimulating that there is an interest from abroad, from Zeist, which activates people here [in Berkane], including members of the administration. ...If people from outside are involved who start thinking with you about the city and the ways the city can be improved then you simply have to become more active.

Several Dutch respondents, who either lived or regularly visited Morocco or Turkey, reported that their local counterparts became more open and creative, and also seemed more emancipated, due to their exposure during the international exchanges. The experience of a consultant of Dutch origin living and working in Turkey who has been engaged in several municipal partnerships underscores this point:

As a positive result you see a kind of democratization on the Turkish side. You see specialists, especially if they are young and have completed their university education, claiming their rights at their department during the project. So—and this is not written anywhere as an objective for cooperation—the projects have a clear spin-off, or how do you call this, something that happened unintentionally, an unintentional outcome. ...Often you see things start to 'brew' after a project is finalized. When they see how things are working at the other side [the Netherlands], people become more emancipated.
One former project coordinator referred to important instrumental skills he developed as a result of the cooperation with Haarlem. After the local elections he was replaced and found a new position at the kaymakan office in Emirdag (a local level decentralized government body directly linked to the national government level), where he was able to use his newly developed skills: ‘I also learned how to write proposals. I just wrote an EU proposal. For LOGO East we also sat down to make proposals, completing the budget forms...and I have developed my English.’

Table 6.2 Learning by Moroccan and Turkish local governments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exchange themes</th>
<th>Waste management</th>
<th>Fire safety and hazardous material</th>
<th>Cultural heritage preservation</th>
<th>Police departments</th>
<th>Youth participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practice-based embedded knowledge through exposure</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization and processes</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispositional and other forms learning (unintended)</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2.3. Dissemination and institutionalization of knowledge

Johnson and Wilson (2007) concluded that in most municipal partnerships a limited number of local government officials are involved and that the knowledge obtained by the participating professionals is not or weakly institutionalized. Institutionalization of knowledge is particularly relevant to prevent loss of the obtained knowledge when the professionals leave the organization. As local governments are political organizations, changes of mayors and other members of the administration occur frequently. Dissemination within the organization is also important for organizational learning, which can strengthen the local government body.

The knowledge attained by the professionals in the case studies was usually shared in an informal way within their own municipality. In most cases, there was no organized follow-up. Nearly all respondents mentioned that they shared their knowledge by meeting with colleagues individually or by sharing their experiences at meetings. Various types of knowledge were exchanged informally: technical knowledge, knowledge on processes and the organizational structure, and general knowledge not directly related to the exchange projects. In a few cases (e.g., the visits of the policy officer responsible for youth in Al Hoceima and an environmental engineer from Afyon

114 This does not necessarily imply that knowledge is lost; professionals often change jobs within the same sector.
Province) reports were written and shared among colleagues. In these cases the embedded knowledge was generalized for dissemination purposes.

Because the municipalities Berkane and Emirdag are small, respondents indicated it was difficult to involve more actors within the municipality on specific subjects. The coordinator for the international exchange with Haarlem in Emirdag was also the sole person responsible for infrastructure; he had no counterpart with whom to converse on the subject. The small size of the municipal body was actually one of the reasons behind the choice to broaden the team, consisting of representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations (interview with former coordinator Emirdag). This proved to be relevant as after the local elections in May 2009, Emirdag received a new major, who, shortly after being elected, replaced the coordinator for international cooperation. (This is not unusual in Turkey; a change of mayors usually also implies changes in several staff positions). Although the new mayor felt that maintaining the partnership with Haarlem was important, the topic of environmental awareness was not high on his agenda. Despite this disruption of the cooperation at the local government level, key knowledge had already been internalized by a wider group of organizations.

Trainings and seminars were helpful for reaching a broader group of practitioners at the same time. The fire departments of Kocaeli and Amsterdam organized trainings for 20–30 firefighters from different fire departments from the wider Kocaeli area. Larger group trainings were also organized by the police departments of Rotterdam and Casablanca. In some cases also training-of-trainers models were used to widen the scope of the training (e.g., in the exchanges between fire departments and the youth participation project).

6.3. Knowledge exchange and learning on wider society level

In some municipal partnerships (Haarlem-Emirdag, Zeist-Berkane and Meppel–Al Hoceima) several actors at the wider civil society level were closely involved and also established transnational relations with their counterparts from the partner municipality. These actors included NGOs (also including CBOs), schools and private companies as well as individual citizens. The most important kind of NGOs involved were women’s, youth and migrant organizations. Exchanges between the various actors

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115 The commander of the fire department in Kocaeli mentioned that they intentionally selected particular firefighters for the exchange, based on their ability to disseminate what they learned with colleagues.

116 No conclusions can be drawn on the effectiveness of these training-of-trainers models; they lie beyond the scope of this research and were not included in the study. The initial findings indicate that for successful dissemination adequate organization and time for the internalization of the new knowledge was required. For instance, two firefighters who participated in a training course explained that they could successfully share some of what they learnt with their colleagues. However, another colleague expressed that he did not have enough time to learn the system well. With more time, he felt he could have been able to pass on the lessons to other staff members.
occurred either in cooperation with local governments or took place largely without the involvement of the local authorities. In most cases no concrete exchange projects were formalized. Exchanges between non-governmental actors included exchanges between primary schools (Haarlem-Emirdag), secondary schools (Meppel–Al Hoceima), youth participation (Zeist-Berkane, Meppel–Al Hoceima) and women’s organizations (Meppel–Al Hoceima). During the research period young people from Zeist and Berkane did assist in setting up a hospital garden. The main aim of the project was to facilitate the exchange between the youth of Zeist and Berkane. In the partnerships Amsterdam-Kocaeli and Rotterdam-Casablanca, NGOs were only involved in the initial phase of the partnership. An important programme was the exchange between Amsterdam and Kocaeli on setting up a workplace for disabled people. The involvement of NGOs not only increased the number of exchanges, it also provided space to strengthen the interfaces between governmental and non-governmental actors (discussed in the next chapter).

### 6.3.1. Methods of exchanging knowledge

Knowledge between NGOs was mainly transferred through field visits and direct peer-to-peer exchanges. It was mainly on-the-job learning through participation in ‘everyday events’ (like meetings of women’s organizations and visits to schools). Because in most cases no concrete exchange projects were formalized, these exchanges were generally less structured compared to the exchanges between local governments (e.g., less training courses and seminars were organized). The most important aspect of the exchange was the sharing of tacit and embedded knowledge, which helped raise awareness on pertinent issues.

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117 Projects whereby clear programmes were set up included the workplace for disabled people in Kocaeli and the environmental project Ecokids, an exchange between two schools in the Haarlem-Emirdag partnership.
6.3.2. Types of knowledge exchanged in relation to types of learning

At the wider society level different kinds of learning occurred. The most important exchange involved the sharing of embedded knowledge, which helped raise awareness on pertinent issues. Also, sharing embedded knowledge regarding processes was seen as important, while learning technical embedded knowledge received less attention in the exchange between NGOs.

**Learning practice-based embedded knowledge**

Like in the exchanges at the local government level, being exposed to another context was important for learning by NGOs. It helped raise awareness and provided new ideas for addressing the problems they face. The director of the workplace for disabled people (the Smiling Faces project), set up with the support of several Dutch partners, mentioned that the exchanges with Dutch peer organizations were particularly relevant for raising awareness:

> The most important part [of the learning] is that given the opportunity and proper training, handicapped people can be a truly integral part of the society, and I was actually surprised to see how well they can function. And second of all,
I learned] that there are actually more handicapped people in Turkey than I previously thought, the numbers were much higher. And I also learned that if the handicapped people are not given the opportunity to socialize and to integrate, they will be suffering from a lot of psychological problems.

A member of the environmental NGO TEMA, a primary school teacher in Emirdag who participated in the team of the LOGO East program, mentioned that the programme was important for informing the citizens of Emirdag about waste management and environmental issues. He explained that the programme was also being integrated in schools at district level:

We have organized some environmental club-like organizations in the district national education directorates. Had there been no such project [LOGO East] we would not have been able to do this. It became a place to discuss environmental problems...so the project has penetrated into the education sphere.

The founder of a women’s organization in Casablanca involved in an exchange programme on domestic violence responded to a question about the most important issues she learned: 'It really was how you can work with the actors of violence...We already had the idea. We knew a lot about the problems. But we did not know how we had to do it. The partnership provided us with a documented practice.'

Learning about organizational structure and processes
There were some examples of learning about organizations and processes. The NGOs involved in the waste management project in the Haarlem-Emirdag partnerships expressed that they learned a lot about working in partnerships (see also section 6.2.2). Also youth organizations found their way to the involved local government (see also the section below on dispositional and other forms of learning). In the exchanges between secondary schools in the Meppel–Al Hoceima partnership, the teacher from Al Hoceima gave guest lectures in Meppel, and he indicated that his visit to several secondary schools in Meppel was very useful for learning about the education system in the Netherlands. Dutch secondary education works with both theoretical and practical oriented tracks. In Morocco the system is less diversified: theoretical learning is central, while practical skills (for example, training for automobile mechanics) are usually acquired on the job. As a member of the national teacher’s union, he was able to initiate discussions on potential changes to the secondary education system. He referred to the importance of gaining new ideas and obtaining the various working experiences required in order to make good proposals to the national Moroccan government.

Members of women’s organizations from Al Hoceima who had visited Meppel indicated they did not learn a great deal of new information; they mainly discussed issues related to the integration of women of migrant origin in Meppel. However, while participating in events organized by women’s organizations in Meppel, they did learn a few useful tips (for example, to organize trainings in smaller groups, which helps
facilitate more intensive time-effective exchanges). These practices proved useful in their work once back in Al Hoceima.

**Dispositional and other forms of learning**

Other forms of learning—in particular dispositional skills—were especially important in the exchanges focusing on youth participation (Zeist-Berkane and Meppel–Al Hoceima). Youth members from various youth organizations in Morocco who were involved in the exchange programmes on youth participation in local governance expressed that they learned how to discuss issues with representatives from local governments as well as other ‘professionals’. Two members of youth organizations in Berkane commented:

> We learned how we have to talk with other [adult] people, how we should discuss issues. ... how you should respect someone when they are talking and that you should first wait [for them] to finish talking before interrupting. ...Now we know how to hold a conversation and how we can discuss things. We have the feeling we are like adults. For instance, when we are at college, we can discuss with the teacher. We were shy at the beginning. We were too shy to ask things.

Several respondents in Berkane also highlighted the importance of the international exchanges for the youth in Berkane, who have limited possibilities to travel due to financial and visa restrictions. Practicing English and broadening their scope by getting in contact with other young people from abroad were mentioned as important types of learning. The policy advisor shared this observation: ‘Our youth are on their own...especially in Berkane. It's a good opportunity for them to meet with others.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms of learning</th>
<th>Exchange themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Schools and environmental awareness</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice-based embedded knowledge through exposure</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization and processes</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispositional and other forms of learning</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Potential opportunities for exchanging knowledge that were not followed up**

Various municipal partnerships (Haarlem-Emirdag, Zeist-Berkane and Meppel–Al Hoceima) explored opportunities to exchange knowledge on healthcare and care for the elderly. Despite the identified potential for mutual exchange and learning, most exchanges were exploratory and have not yet led to concrete exchange programmes,
primarily due to time and financial constraints. Funds were secured for the establishment of the workplace for disabled people in Kocaeli and for the exchange between the health department of Rotterdam (GGD) and the NGO AMVEF on combating domestic violence (through the MATRA programme). Worth mentioning is also the construction of a home for the elderly in Emirdag, funded to the Turkish diaspora living in Western Europe and private companies based in Turkey. Possibilities for mutual exchange that were explored but not followed up included:

- Knowledge exchange between hospitals. Cooperation between local hospitals in the municipal partnership between Haarlem and Emirdag were explored but due to language barriers and management changes at the hospital in Emirdag the first exchanges were not followed up. Also the knowledge exchange between the hospitals in Zeist and Berkane did not materialize in concrete programmes.
- Knowledge exchange on care for elderly and disabled persons. Possibilities for cooperation between the home for the elderly (maison des personnes âgées) between Zeist and Berkane were explored but no exchanges were organized during the research period.
- A new programme for the care of disabled persons was initiated by the Haarlem-Emirdag foundation and the Turkish NGO TEMA. Initial expert visits (paid with private money) did take place and seemed promising as several actors were involved and there was a clear need for exchanging knowledge. However, also this initiative had no follow-up.

The initiative by the home for the elderly in Berkane serves as an illustration of the perceived need for obtaining new knowledge. This was a newly established home, the first in the region and possibly one of only a few of its kind in Morocco. It was built in response to a growing need: an increasing number of elderly persons do not have family members nearby to take care of them. Previously there never was a perceived need to set up such a facility, because traditionally the elderly are looked after by family members. The home for the elderly was set up by a group of citizens and was not financially supported by the national government. Members of the administration expressed their strong interest to learn from their peer institutions in the Netherlands. A board member of the home shared the challenges:

> We don’t have anyone specialized in that [taking care of the elderly]....That’s why it is important for someone to go [to Zeist] and see how we should act. ...Or, for example, send us a tape so that we can have a look at how things work, so that we can do the same. There are enough people [in Berkane] who understand the Dutch language. ...We don’t have any experience in managing an elderly home. Every Saturday we get a doctor and a nurse to them. But we are scared to be honest.
Part B: The Netherlands
Part B focuses on knowledge exchange and learning of the Dutch participants in the case studies. A division is made between learning at the local government level and learning at the wider societal level; however, it should be noted that in most municipal partnership these processes could not be clearly separated. Both types of actors cooperated in the same projects, and learning within these projects was relevant for both governmental and non-governmental organizations.

6.4. Knowledge exchange and learning; governance processes in Dutch municipalities

Through the cooperation with partner municipalities in Morocco and Turkey, Dutch municipalities (as well as non-governmental actors) can try to (1) gain new knowledge regarding the needs and interests of their inhabitants of Moroccan and Turkish descent, in order to better reach these groups or to adjust policies on integration; and (2) foster a positive feeling among citizens of migrant origin and build bridges between the municipal government and citizens of migrant origin (Van Ewijk and Baud 2009). In addition, local governments can also benefit from these partnerships in other ways—which are not unique to cooperation with migrant source countries and also occur in other municipal partnerships. These types of learning and benefits include learning about economic development and human resource management. Moreover, global awareness among the population (also known as global citizenship) can be increased through city-to-city linkages (Bontenbal 2009a; Johnson and Wilson 2007, 2009).

Despite the interest in establishing ties with Moroccan and Turkish municipalities as main migrant source countries, Dutch municipalities did not have clearly defined objectives for learning. Strengthening local governance in the partner municipality was usually central in exchange programmes (Van Ewijk 2007). As discussed in chapter 5, support programmes had an important impact on the exchange as they focused only on strengthening local governance in Morocco and Turkey.

For the exchange focusing on learning in the Netherlands, police departments and departments dealing with social affairs and social cohesion were involved. It should be noted that learning by Dutch professionals did also occur in projects which focused primarily on strengthening local governance in Morocco and Turkey (like the exchange between the fire brigades), although it was not a stated objective.

6.4.1. Methods of exchanging different types of knowledge
Exchanges focusing on learning by Dutch municipalities were generally less structured than the exchanges focusing on strengthening local governments in Morocco and Turkey. This is related to the lack of clearly defined programmes for cooperation. Knowledge was mainly exchanged through field visits, which included meetings with several local organizations and short peer-to-peer exchanges. Limited use was also
made of organized trainings, which can reach a larger number of participants (an exception is presented in box 6.2). For the exchanges with a strong focus on learning by the Dutch participants, generally only a few local government staff members were involved and in most cases only once or twice. This recognized strength of city-to-city cooperation (long-lasting relations and repeated engagement of the persons involved, which build trust and in turn facilitate knowledge exchanges and learning), seems to have been largely overlooked or not utilized for the exchanges focused on learning by Dutch municipalities. In contrast, in the exchange focusing on strengthening local governance in Morocco and Turkey, both repeated contacts (which nurture trust) and group trainings (which increase the scope of the impact) were used. Table 6.5 presents an overview of the various methods of exchanging knowledge, demonstrating that mainly tacit knowledge on cultural issues was exchanged.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods of exchanging knowledge</th>
<th>Extent of the exchange and type of knowledge exchanged*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer-to-peer, ‘on the job’</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tacit and cultural embedded knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings and workshops</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field visits</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tacit and cultural embedded knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences and other events</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint training courses</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange through written documents</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No distinction is made in various themes as there were no clear differences in the methods used for the exchange of knowledge between the various themes.

### 6.4.2. Types of knowledge exchanges in relation to types of learning

Several different types of learning took place through the exchanges with partner municipalities from Morocco and Turkey: learning on cultural issues and diversity, learning on issues with a transnational dimension as well as reflections on one’s work processes.
Learning on cultural issues and diversity

An important domain of learning was learning on cultural issues and diversity. This learning can be defined as the acquisition of knowledge regarding the increasing diversity (in terms of population and culture) within Dutch society. The knowledge is directly related to fostering social cohesion and integration of the Moroccan and Turkish community in the Netherlands and directly linked to the day-to-day work practices of the involved professionals in the Netherlands. Learning on cultural issues and diversity was particularly evident in city-to-city partnerships that actively involved NGOs and occurred both during exchange visits by partners from Morocco and Turkey to the Netherlands and vice versa. This learning occurred mainly through the exchange of culturally embedded knowledge. Although several examples were noted, the extent of this kind of learning in the case studies was still limited, mainly because it was not a clearly defined objective and lacked a project framework as well as a strategic approach to facilitating this learning. The partner municipalities in Morocco and Turkey mobilized important complementary resources to facilitate this type of knowledge exchange. As will be discussed in chapter 8, especially the candid hospitality of various Moroccan and Turkish organizations was highly appreciated by the Dutch participants.

Nearly all the professionals interviewed in the Netherlands mentioned that the partnerships were important for general learning on cultural issues. It helped Dutch officers put issues they experienced in their own work in perspective. This kind of learning mainly occurred during visits to Morocco and Turkey, where the Dutch professionals were exposed to a different context. Police officers from the Rotterdam-Rijnmond Police Department involved in the exchange programme with Casablanca indicated that they learned a lot during their stay in Casablanca. It facilitated their acquisition of both generalized and embedded knowledge on Morocco as well as on the Moroccan community in Rotterdam (consulted during the preparation for their visits). An officer at the Rotterdam-Rijnmond Police Department reflected on his visit to Casablanca: ‘It does increase your understanding on how people [of Moroccan descent] experience the culture here [in the Netherlands], what needs they have and which paradoxes and dilemma’s they face in our society.’ This kind of learning was important in developing cultural sensitivity and was therefore also appreciated and recognized as an important type of learning by officers and members of the administration in Dutch municipalities. Another officer at the Rotterdam-Rijnmond Police Department highlighted the value of this learning, particularly in the training of police officers in cultural sensitivity issues. Persons of migrant origin are not well represented in the police department (an estimated 15% of police officers were of migrant origin, while half of the population of Rotterdam is of migrant origin).

Visits of Moroccan and Turkish delegations to Dutch organizations also provided the opportunity to discuss issues related to the integration of migrants in Dutch society, such as the limited involvement of parents of Moroccan and Turkish descent in schools. A policy officer from Zeist talked about the new insight a school gained through the exchange with his Moroccan counterpart:
One of the issues to discuss was, is this [limited involvement of parents in school] the case in Morocco as well? The mayor [of Berkane], who has a background in education, referred to the big differences between schools situated in better-off urban areas and schools in the poorer rural areas in Morocco. ...They [the parents in poorer and rural areas] are often illiterate and look up to the teachers and don't even think they could do something meaningful in school.

**Box 6.3 Criticism of ‘fuzzy’ Dutch communication techniques**

Through the cooperation with their partner municipality in Turkey, the Municipality of Deventer identified some important cultural differences in communication. The exchange provided important information on how to improve communication with the parents of primary school pupils. The partner municipality criticized the Dutch approach of, on the one hand, communicating that meetings are ‘open’ for anyone who wishes to participate, while, on the other hand, expecting that most parents will attend. They advised their counterparts to send clearer messages and make participation in meetings compulsory for parents.

A police officer in Meppel who operated at the neighbourhood level referred to the importance of translocal linkages between Meppel and Al Hoceima for facilitating learning. He expressed that his experience of building a contact network in Al Hoceima helped him establish contacts in Meppel and address sensitive diversity-related issues. For instance, he explained that citizens of Moroccan descent often used cultural differences as an explanation for their attitudes or behaviour. Through his visit to Al Hoceima, he learned that women in Al Hoceima were taking a much more active role in civic life than he anticipated, and he used this experience and personal contacts (including with the mayor of Al Hoceima, who is a woman) to support more active participation of women in society in Meppel.  

The joint mission to Morocco by the Health Department of the Municipality of Amsterdam (GGD) and an alderman from the Municipality of Meppel is an example of municipalities aiming to better understand the cultural background of their migrant constituents, in order to formulate new policies to better engage and involve these groups. They discussed their problems in reaching out and involving women of Moroccan origin living in Amsterdam and Meppel on diabetes issues. The Moroccan counterpart was able to provide concrete advice, such as translating information into Berber instead of Arabic (since most women had a Berber background) and reaching out to women through their children in schools (Van Ewijk and Baud 2009).

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118 For example, he brought up this difference between contexts in a conversation with a father who was hesitant to support his daughters' ambitions to go to college.
Box 6.4 Learning from successful tailor-made literacy programmes

The Municipality of Amsterdam invited representatives from their partner municipality Larache (Morocco) to a conference on social and literacy programmes, with the aim to learn from their peers. The information they obtained helped them better understand the needs of the migrant communities:

Whereas we [Amsterdam] tend to think in large models that are applicable at every location, they [Larache] are working with around 20 NGOs, mainly because they have realized you have to offer tailor-made programmes. This was very interesting for professionals here. We realized we should perhaps stop thinking about having one programme for everyone. Maybe you should organize something different for Moroccan women originating from the northern part of Morocco and people originating from Iraq or Iran. These kinds of things...really make people think we should perhaps arrange things in another way.

These examples clearly illustrate that exchanges with peers in migrant source countries can trigger deep and fundamental learning in their Dutch counterparts. Due to several constraints, however, lessons could not always be implemented (see chapter 7).

In some cases partners were critical of Dutch policies that increasingly are moving in the direction of assimilation. The chairman of an environmental NGO, who visited the Netherlands, commented, ‘in the Netherlands they don’t understand them, they don’t help them much, they are sort of forcing them to be Dutch’. Likewise, in a meeting with several policy advisors at the city hall in Meppel, a councillor from Al Hoceima commented on the Dutch policy of phasing out support programmes for immigrants due to budget cuts. He and the other members of the delegation found that these programmes were very important for strengthening the ability of migrants of Moroccan descent to cope with their new situation. They commented, ‘You can’t just transfer a plant and say “grow!” It will perish.’

Box 6.5 Searching far away while knowledge might be nearby

Some Dutch citizens of Turkish and Moroccan descent who were not directly involved in the exchange programmes were critical about Dutch municipalities' effort to learn from their peer municipality. They argued that some of these lessons could also be learned through discussions and consultations with Dutch citizens of Turkish and Moroccan descent living in the Netherlands and felt that the municipality should put more effort in establishing linkages with migrants and migrant organization.119

In a few cases Dutch municipalities did draw on the expertise available within their municipal borders, leading to a termination of the municipal partnership. According to a policy officer responsible for international relations in the Municipality of Almelo, the main vocational training school (ROC) explored possibilities to exchange knowledge on a literacy programme with the Municipality of Denizli. In the course of the collaboration, however, it was found that this knowledge was readily available in Almelo, resulting in the termination of the exchange.

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119 Another concern mentioned by a few Dutch citizens is the interference of foreign government bodies in Dutch policy affairs. Generally, at the local level there appeared to be limited resistance, while the discussion at the national level on the interference of foreign governments in Dutch internal affairs leads to more tensions.
Learning regarding issues with a transnational dimension

Dutch citizens of Moroccan and Turkish descent often maintain close linkages with their home country. They travel to their home country to spend their holidays and visit family members, or they may spend several months or years living in their country of origin. These personal connections create transnational linkages between migrant source and destination countries. At the local level several Dutch municipalities cooperated and exchanged knowledge with partner municipalities in migrant source countries, in order to bridge these so-called disjointed spaces. In the case studies included in this thesis only a few examples were found that involved learning regarding issues with a transnational linkage. The clearest example was learning from embedded knowledge, seen in the cooperation between police departments.

The international relations coordinator from the police department of Rotterdam-Rijnmond commented that by cooperating with the police department in Casablanca he learned key details about how the police in Morocco functioned. The police in Morocco is organized under a highly centralized system. The knowledge he obtained proved to be very useful, for example, when requesting assistance from police departments in Morocco in locating individuals suspected of criminal activities or possible witnesses. He explained how he was able to bypass the cumbersome formal procedure for submitting a request for legal assistance, and use the contact network he created in Morocco to speed up processes. The experiences allowed him to use both formal channels (sending an official letter to the national authority) as well as his informal network. This kind of learning was made possible by working together with Moroccan professionals and by visiting Morocco and meeting people personally. The importance of this type of learning was acknowledged, even though it was not formulated as an official cooperation objective.

A police officer in Meppel explained that email exchanges with a police officer in Al Hoceima were helpful for exchanging generalized knowledge on new legislation in Morocco important for his own work in Meppel. For example, learning about the new family law helped in his contacts with divorced women who wanted to remigrate to Morocco and wanted to know more about their rights. He could have gained this kind of knowledge through other channels (e.g. documents); however, directly exchanging this knowledge with his colleague in Al Hoceima was practical, quick and ‘to the point’.

Reflecting on one’s own work processes

On a more general level the cooperation provided the participants with the opportunity to reflect on their own work practices. Many respondents, including members of the administration and policy officers, indicated that the international exchanges helped them to look at their own work with ‘new eyes’. This was equally important for all

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120 There are other examples of these kinds of exchanges between the Netherlands and several migrant source countries, including Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles. A clear example is the cooperation between health departments and health organizations in Amsterdam and Suriname to support Dutch citizens of Suriname origin who spend time both in the Netherlands and Suriname, and who are in need of continuous physical and/or mental medical care (see Van Ewijk and Baud 2009).
Partners in the exchanges, regardless whether Moroccan, Turkish or Dutch. Part of this learning was specific to cooperation with migrant source countries, while other parts could have happened in contacts with local governments in any part of the world. The mayor of Zeist shared that being in Berkane helped him ‘open up to other ways of doing things’, which was useful in his own work in Zeist:

For us an appointment is an appointment. When we are there [Berkane] things are arranged differently. There are different kinds of mechanism which have similar meanings. If you don’t experience this yourself, slowly a mechanism might slip in so that you start measuring things according to your own standards.

Likewise a policy advisor from the Municipality in Amsterdam responded to an open question about personal learning in relation to her work:

Just being conscious that everything that we take for granted is not that straightforward. ... Really, I see it happening with people responsible for certain issues...by visiting the county, in their work with the Moroccan community they suddenly understand: ‘Oh yes, that’s where it came from. Now I understand!’ Personally, I experienced it as well.

Many respondents also referred to Dutch work processes as dominated by bureaucracy and regulations, which has led to a loss of flexibility and creativity. Three representatives from the fire department of Amsterdam (interviewed separately), for instance, referred to ‘overregulated processes’, which implied a delay before being able to act on an emergency or being too dependent on fixed procedures, with little or no space for flexibility and creativity. The officers also mentioned that they learned about creative solutions from their peers in Kocaeli (Turkey). The former director of the housing department of Amsterdam also shared this sentiment: ‘I learned that we exaggerate bureaucracy too much in the Netherlands, that we avoid risks. ...We even show responsibility-avoidance behaviour.’

Also small-scale personal lessons were drawn. A policy advisor mentioned that he sometimes introduced a more open and personal approach towards his colleagues, for instance, at the start of a meeting. He experienced this in Morocco. He talked about the Dutch working style of getting ’straight to the point’ and its weaknesses. In some cases it might be very helpful to know the reasons behind someone’s reactions: the person might be tired or stressed, or concerned about a sick family member.

Other forms of learning that were mentioned included working in a different context (e.g., the importance of first obtaining more knowledge about the local context before starting a project), respecting other forms of time management, and different ways of organizing work schedules. These kinds of learning are forms of deep (double-loop) learning.\textsuperscript{121} By experiencing different work processes people reflected on their own work practices and got new ideas. This type of learning was perceived by some

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{121} Deep learning refers to transformative learning beyond copying or adapting knowledge.
respondents as a side effect and was not always recognized. Other respondents felt that it was an essential part of the exchange. Two officers (one from the Municipality of Rotterdam and another from the Municipality of Amsterdam) mentioned that they were convinced the exposure to another context was actually more efficient than sending staff members to expensive external training courses within the Netherlands. Table 6.6 presents the various forms of learning in the Dutch municipalities.

Table 6.6 Learning by Dutch local governments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms of learning</th>
<th>Exchange themes/organizations</th>
<th>Police</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Care/welfare</th>
<th>Other/general</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning on cultural issues and diversity</td>
<td>strong</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>strong</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning on issues with a transnational dimension</td>
<td>strong</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection on own work</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Moderate (Deep or double-loop learning on own work processes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.4.3. Dissemination and institutionalization of knowledge within local governments

As described in the previous chapter, only a few Dutch officers were involved in the exchanges where learning by Dutch municipalities was a central objective. Departments dealing with social cohesion and integration were generally not involved or only marginally. The interviewed policy officers felt that there was a lot to gain by embedding the municipal partnerships within the organizational structure of the municipality. A policy officer of Moroccan descent from Meppel, for instance, felt that the international cooperation should be integrated in general policies and linked up with social themes. An officer from the Municipality of Amsterdam who had previously worked at the national government level made a comparison to the way international cooperation is embedded at the national level:

I feel that all employees should incorporate international cooperation within their work, if it is useful for their work. ...20 years ago it was not self evident that a line department at the national level would be active internationally. I would like to see the same shift within the municipality.

In most municipal departments information regarding the international cooperation was internally disseminated through the intranet and magazines. The exchanges were also discussed during meetings and informal gatherings. However, in most cases these initiatives were primarily organized to inform a wider range of people and to create support for the municipal partnership—not for deeper forms of knowledge exchange and learning. As the research did not include a deeper analysis of learning among
municipal staff not directly engaged in the international programmes, this could be an area for further research.

6.5. **Knowledge exchange and learning on the wider civil society level**

Briefly recapitulating from chapter 5, NGOs were involved in the municipal partnerships based on indirect transnational linkages between small to medium-sized municipalities (Haarlem-Emirdag, Zeist-Berkane and Meppel–Al Hoceima). Under the umbrella of the municipal partnerships, schools, women’s organizations (in Zeist and Meppel) and youth organizations (in Zeist and Meppel) participated in the exchange programmes. Although several individual migrants and migrant groups were involved, the utilization of their knowledge and networks was still limited.

6.5.1. **Methods of exchanging knowledge**

Like the exchange between local governments, knowledge transfer between Dutch NGOs and their Moroccan and Turkish counterparts took place primarily through field visits and peer-to-peer exchanges. People were learning ‘on the job’ by participating in regular events (programmes between the women’s organizations and schools). Similarly to the exchanges between local government bodies, the exchanges were generally not very structured. Only in some cases were training courses and seminars organized.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods of exchanging knowledge</th>
<th>Extent of the exchange and type of knowledge exchanged*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer-to-peer, ‘on the job’</td>
<td>Moderate Tacit and cultural embedded knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings and workshops</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field visits</td>
<td>Strong Tacit and cultural embedded knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences and other events</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint training courses</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange through written documents</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* No distinction is made in various themes as there were no clear differences in the methods used for the exchange of knowledge between the various themes

6.5.2. **Types of knowledge in relation to types of learning**

Learning on cultural issues and diversity was mentioned by NGOs as the most important form of learning, while learning regarding issues with a transnational dimension was hardly mentioned. Reflection on own work processes was mentioned in a few cases.
Learning on cultural issues and diversity

Learning on cultural issues and diversity on the civil society level occurred in all Dutch municipalities and this learning was to a large extent similar to the learning taking place between local government bodies. This similarity was particularly evident in general cultural learning and learning regarding diversity. The extent was limited in most NGOs largely due to the fact it was not structurally embedded within the partnership. The main objectives of the youth exchanges Zeist-Berkane and Meppel–Al Hoceima were to become more familiar with ‘the other’ and to combat prejudices. These exchanges will be further discussed in the next chapter on mutual learning.

Learning was most prominent in the exchanges between schools and in the exchange on social welfare in the Meppel–Al Hoceima and Zeist-Berkane partnerships. The coordinator of a local welfare organization closely linked with the Municipality of Meppel mentioned that she applied a substantial amount of what she learned in Morocco in her daily work (she is of Moroccan origin and frequently visits Morocco):

I have developed a specific way of working based on my profession and heritage. ...I learned that there [in Morocco]. Since 1999 and Mohamed VI, a lot has been invested in villages and women’s centres. I have seen it there, and, as there was also a need among women in Meppel to meet each other, I have negotiated with the municipality to establish a women’s association in Meppel.

She was also involved in the exchanges between women’s organizations from Meppel and Al Hoceima, which were said to positively affect the emancipation of Dutch women of Moroccan origin. According to her and several other respondents from Meppel, the women’s organizations in Al Hoceima were more active in fulfilling multiple roles in their own municipality—including paid and voluntary work—than women of Moroccan origin in Meppel. These women expressed that they were motivated to become more active in their own municipality through the exchange. Establishing contacts with their peers from Al Hoceima also provided help in addressing sensitive issues. The participants from Meppel spoke openly and emotionally about problems they experienced with their own children experimenting with drugs. This was remarkable as, according to the women, this topic is taboo in the Moroccan community.

A teacher from a primary school in Haarlem, which has many students from migrant backgrounds (including several children whose parents were born in Emirdag), talked about the benefits of her visit to their partner school in Emirdag:122 ‘It’s a good thing to know where the children originate from...that you have an image in your head...that you are able to understand certain issues.’ The exchange also helped her establish better contacts with parents as will be further discussed in the next chapter.

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122 The teacher secured the funding for this trip through support from an organization not participating in the partnership.
Reflecting on one’s own work processes
Reflecting on one’s own work processes was mentioned by care organizations in the exchange between Meppel and Al Hoceima. Also the learning by women’s organizations can be described as a form of reflection on own work processes. An interesting example outside the scope of the case studies is described in box 6.6.

Box 6.6 Timeframes and calculation in care for people with disabilities
A care organization in Nijmegen was involved in the exchange with a care organization for (physical and mentally) disabled person in their partner municipality Gaziantep (Turkey). Several exchanges were organized, including visits by Turkish professionals to the Netherlands and vice versa. Members of the Dutch organization mentioned that they learned from the warm way in which their colleagues in the partner municipality treated people with disabilities. They received valuable feedback from Gaziantep on their own working processes: dominated by timeframes and calculations, they leave little space for personal human contacts.

The different kinds of learning taking place for the different exchanges are summarized in Table 6.8

Table 6.8 Learning at wider civil society level in the Netherlands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms of learning</th>
<th>On cultural issues and diversity</th>
<th>On issues with transnational dimension</th>
<th>Reflection on work practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schools and environmental awareness</td>
<td>Welfare and disabled persons</td>
<td>Youth participation</td>
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<tr>
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Part C. Small-scale private development initiatives and the role of diasporas

6.6. Involvement in small-scale private development initiatives

In the framework of municipal partnerships between migrant source and destination countries several governmental as well as non-governmental actors were involved through small-scale private development initiatives. These initiatives mainly focused on donation of goods and financial resources and not on the exchange of knowledge and learning. This does not imply that no learning occurred; it simply was not a stated objective. Johnson and Wilson (2009) referred to the differences between the kind of exchange processes between local governments and NGOs—as ‘complex sides’ as ‘they revolve around the tensions between engagement and aid’—or between ‘the creation of conversational and action learning spaces’ and providing aid (Johnson and Wilson 2009: 216, see also section 2.7). The small-scale private development initiatives are highlighted here as they are important in relation to partnership conditions and
mutuality, and they also illustrate the utilization of transnational linkages by third parties and the effect that these linkages can have on promoting citizen participation in development projects. Promotion of global citizenship and public support for international cooperation is generally considered an important aspect of city-to-city cooperation (Johnson and Wilson 2009; Bontenbal 2009a; Van Ewijk and Van Lindert 2010).

Most development initiatives in the Moroccan and Turkish municipalities included in this research focused on reconstruction after an earthquake and small-scale projects assisting children, women or the elderly. It should not come as a surprise that there were more private initiatives in the partnerships based on translocal linkages than in the other partnerships. The cases with strong translocal ties were usually concentrated in particular geographic areas. Some of these initiatives were encouraged or coordinated by Dutch local governments, with the underlying purpose of strengthening social cohesion and the interfaces between local government and civil society.\(^{123}\) Initiatives were set up both by professionals (working with local government or NGOs) and individual citizens. There were more private initiatives in the Dutch-Moroccan municipal partnerships compared with the Dutch-Turkish municipal partnerships. This is likely related to the limited financial support provided by the Moroccan government. Moreover, the donation of goods between local governments is restricted by Turkish national legislation.

### 6.6.1. Donation of goods and financial resources from the diasporas

The funds collected by the diasporas for the earthquake-affected areas (Kocaeli in 1999 and Al Hoceima in 2004) were mainly used for reconstruction of houses or schools. The Turkish diaspora from various Western European countries also contributed to the construction of a home for the elderly in Emirdag. There were other examples of individual migrants establishing projects: the director of an employment agency in Zeist, a woman of Moroccan descent, was involved in setting up a women’s business support centre in Berkane, and an architect of Moroccan descent drafted the construction designs for the centre. In one case a remigrant was involved: a Dutch-Moroccan owner of a transport company for fruits and vegetables living in Berkane was motivated to contribute to an exchange project between youth working on the construction of a hospital garden.\(^{124}\) He hosted a delegation of Dutch and Moroccan youth and donated benches for the hospital garden. He explained that he was aware of the needs of the hospital and that he was motivated to make a personal contribution by the ongoing cooperation with the Dutch municipality.

\(^{123}\) These findings are based on policy documents and the interviews with officers responsible for international exchange programmes.

\(^{124}\) Other companies in Berkane also contributed with small donations, and the youth of Berkane worked additional hours to finalize the garden.
6.6.2. Donation of goods and financial resources by municipal staff members

The exchanges also had a strong personal impact on the municipal staff members involved. Several Dutch participants were—for the first time—made aware of the serious challenges faced by the inhabitants of some areas of Morocco and Turkey. This awareness motivated them to establish small-scale initiatives centred on donation of goods. The Municipality of Zeist and related partners donated wheelchairs to both the home for the elderly and the hospital as well as a small second-hand van to the home for the elderly in Berkane. The initiative was supported by the Morocco Fund, a Dutch NGO. The staff of the Municipality of Zeist donated the money from their Christmas bonus to two women’s organizations in Berkane. In total, the municipality collected EUR 5,400; this sum was matched (60% of the total) by a donation from a Dutch development cooperation organization (Wilde Ganzen). Employees of the police department of Meppel donated an oven (a priority need for the all-girls boarding school in Al Hoceima), and a policy officer with a small business in handbags introduced a social responsibility programme in her webshop, to collect funds for the boarding school.

6.6.3. Youth organizations

The youth from Zeist engaged in the exchange programme with Berkane set up an organization called ‘Youth without borders’, with the aim to support various initiatives in developing countries. They started by working with their counterpart organization in Berkane to collect money to support a literacy project for women in Berkane. Interestingly, these young people (both second-generation migrants of Moroccan descent as well as native Dutch youth) were able to apply some of the key principles of sustainable international cooperation with ease: working with a local organization, promoting local ownership and stimulating the local economy by purchasing goods in Morocco (rather than transporting old goods from the Netherlands to Morocco).

Although the focus of the municipal partnerships was not on donating goods or financial resources, the civil society initiatives outlined above demonstrate the potential positive effects of established municipal partnerships for setting up private development initiatives. Initiatives often started when representatives of Dutch municipalities and civil society organizations visited organizations in their partner municipality and were confronted with the scarcities on the ground. Through the involvement in the initiatives, people also obtained knowledge about life in Morocco and Turkey. This is a form of exposure and learning which is likely to be useful to cooperation programmes in Morocco and Turkey and for general learning on cultural issues. However, the linkage for learning in their own working practices for those involved was in most cases less clear. These small-scale, tangible initiatives were generally very much appreciated by the organizations in Morocco.

125 The donation of the van—especially the administrative paperwork—turned out to be a complicated and time-consuming procedure, which put a lot of pressure on the relationship between Zeist and Berkane.
6.7. Role of Dutch citizens of Moroccan and Turkish descent

In the municipal partnerships covered by this research, Dutch citizens of Moroccan or Turkish descent fulfilled an important role as facilitators of transnational exchanges. These individuals included representatives of local governments (like councillors and policy officers), representatives of non-governmental organizations, consultants as well as individual citizens. They fulfilled three main roles: (1) initiators, (2) translators and facilitators, and (3) resource persons for knowledge and networks.

First of all, Dutch citizens of Moroccan and Turkish descent were often the initiators of municipal partnerships, especially in the cases of the natural disasters and the existing translocal linkages. As explained in the first part of this chapter, several Dutch municipalities were involved in providing relief for the two earthquakes. In the Marmara Region in Turkey, aldermen, councillors and other municipal staff members of Turkish descent played an important role. They were able to organize quickly and could build on their knowledge of the region and provide assistance in the organization of relief aid (VNG 2000; Nell 2007). These transnational linkages generally did not have a clear translocal dimension. Nell (2007: 212) argued that Dutch politicians of Turkish descent worked under dual pressure, as they needed to demonstrate that they did not only act in favour of the Turkish diasporas living in the Netherlands, while at the same time their political parties and the constituencies expected councillors to have networks and knowledge of the Turkish communities. An example of a municipal partnership based on direct translocal linkages is the partnership between Haarlem and Emirdag which was initiated by the Haarlem NGO ‘Haarlem-Emirdag’ in cooperation with their partner NGO TEMA.

Second, migrants fulfilled key roles as translators and facilitators, as the majority of professionals from Dutch origin did not speak Arabic, Berber, French (cooperation with Morocco) or Turkish (cooperation with Turkey). Also, they often helped overcome sensitive issues, for instance, by not translating everything directly (both observed during the exchanges and mentioned by the migrants themselves). A Rotterdam-based consultant of Moroccan descent (who worked at a NGO at the time) shared this view:

I am not an official interpreter. So I have that freedom; I do not have to translate everything word-for-word. ...My assignment included ‘making a cultural translation’. It was a challenge. Sometimes I had to talk around the issue.

The Moroccan counterpart involved in the same exchange programme commented on the role of the consultant;

She is of two cultures, that’s why she can understand both sides. It is my impression she fulfilled a very positive role. She fulfilled the role as interpreter. But I saw from the facial expressions at both sides there were certain issues at

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126 The role of migrants in Dutch-Moroccan and Dutch-Turkish municipal partnerships was discussed in a paper presented at the conference ‘Transnational dynamics, changing inequalities and the transformation of locality’, conference 29-30 November 2012 (see annex 6).
stake. By translating the essential parts and perhaps not all sensitive issues [she connected both sides] ...She created a conducive atmosphere.

In some cases migrants or migrant organizations acted as intermediary bodies. Their role can be compared to building bridges in the exchange process. The chair of the Haarlem-Emirdag Foundation (originally from Emirdag and working for the Municipality of Haarlem), for instance, would contact the Municipality of Emirdag in case they did not reply to the emails from the Municipality of Haarlem. In Berkane employees working at SSR acted as a mediating body, which proved to be important in the ‘fine-tuning’ of the process of knowledge exchange. These employees were of Moroccan descent and had a good understanding of both contexts and cultural differences, as they had both lived for many years in the Netherlands and Morocco.

Third, migrants also contributed with knowledge and networks. In the Dutch-Moroccan and Dutch-Turkish municipal partnerships included in this research, migrant knowledge on cultural issues was an import asset in the exchanges. They could prepare their colleagues on sensitive issues or the specific characteristics of Morocco and Turkey. In the exchange between the fire departments of Amsterdam and Kocaeli on hazardous material, an expert of Turkish descent from the fire department of Amsterdam played a key role in the exchanges: he had specialized knowledge and was able to communicate it directly in the Turkish language. This was a very important contribution as certain professional terms and knowledge cannot be easily translated by someone without experience. He also helped translate generalized written knowledge from Dutch to Turkish. His supervisor was quick to point out the invaluable contribution of the firefighter:

We can do the entire hazardous material programme because we have [him] in our service. If we had no Turkish speaking advisor for hazardous material, I don’t think we could have done the programme the way we did. In that case it [the exchange programme] would have been smaller.

Migrants who had maintained strong ties with their home countries could also draw on their networks in Morocco and Turkey. However, their knowledge on governance arrangements and civil society organizations was limited, as most of them had lived many years in the Netherlands or were born in the Netherlands, and did not have up-to-date knowledge on governance processes in Morocco and Turkey. These findings point to the fact that expectations need to be realistic when considering the knowledge that migrants can provide. Generally speaking, municipalities mainly relied on a few key resource persons of migrant descent, who also held key positions in the Dutch municipalities. Moreover, limited use was made of the knowledge and network of migrants. A consultant of Moroccan origin who was involved in an exchange programme

\footnote{Based on various interviews with policy officers from the municipalities of Zeist and Berkane, SSR and own observations.}
on constructing a botanical garden in Casablanca (plagued by many problems and delays) shared his observation:

It [the problems with the project] was about communication; it was about email messages that were not replied to. I thought, ‘why don’t you involve someone who speaks the language, who can just call or go there and arrange a few things quickly?’ If you want to keep it in your own hands [as a municipality] you will get these kinds of problems.

There were no important differences between the Dutch-Moroccan and Dutch-Turkish partnerships in the roles that migrants played. In both partnerships professionals of Moroccan or Turkish descent from governmental and non-governmental organizations were involved, and in both partnerships translators were needed.

Dutch people who lived in Turkey and Morocco for many years also fulfilled a similar and important facilitating role, and provided important information on governance arrangements. Some examples include the former consul general of the Dutch embassy who lived in Casablanca, a Dutch journalist who lived close to Al Hoceima, and a consultant who lived in Kocaeli, Turkey. The role of migrants and these experts in providing knowledge will also be discussed in the next section.

6.7.1. The other side of the coin: drawbacks and challenges

Involving professionals of migrant origin as translators had clear advantages; however, it also had some important drawbacks. An important disadvantage became obvious during meetings where a team of native Dutch professionals and professionals of Moroccan or Turkish descent cooperated directly. In these exchanges, the professionals of Dutch origin were excluded or felt excluded as the migrants unintentionally took over the communication. The extent of trust between the team members in the Dutch delegation proved crucial for overcoming these drawbacks. Whereas in one mission trust was well established, in another one the lack of trust and open communication caused problems. Policy advisors from the Municipality of Zeist commented that in certain missions translators were too involved in the discussions or did not translate everything. As a result they were not able to follow the knowledge exchange process. They even became suspicious of what was actually being said. According to a policy officer from the Municipality of Zeist, ‘At a certain moment in time they thought, “we don’t need her.” ...At a certain moment I felt I had no control over what was happening. It was not a nice feeling.’ An example of an exchange where trust was well established was a workshop about waste management in Emirdag. During this workshop the discussion became emotional and the Turkish participants spoke very fast. The translator (a Dutch consultant of Turkish descent) was not able to translate everything directly. A policy officer from the Municipality of Haarlem welcomed the vivid debate and commented, in quite relaxed fashion, that he would look at the report from his team member after the workshop.
6.7.2. **Roles within the Dutch municipality**

In addition to the transnational activities within the framework of the municipal partnerships, many migrant organizations were also engaged in organizing activities within their own Dutch municipalities. These activities often aimed at strengthening the connection between migrant groups and native Dutch citizens. One respondent, a citizen of Moroccan descent living in Zeist, mentioned he was inspired to start activities within his own municipality through the international engagement. In some cases, activities focusing on social cohesion within the Dutch local government were connected to transnational engagement. Examples include the annual event ‘World tour through Zeist’ and the cultural events organized by the Haarlem-Emirdag Foundation in Haarlem. This foundation also secured additional funds to organize activities within Haarlem in the framework of international exchanges. In both Zeist and Haarlem these events were sometimes synchronized with the visit by a delegation from their partner municipality.

6.8. **Conclusions**

Different methods of exchanging knowledge in partnerships were identified in the literature, in conjunction with the kinds of knowledge exchanged. This chapter addressed the questions of how local governments and other actors involved in Dutch-Moroccan and Dutch-Turkish municipal partnerships exchange knowledge, what different types of knowledge are exchanged and what kinds of learning take place within these partnerships.

The chapter showed the most important methods of exchanging knowledge in the case studies include peer-to-peer learning, meetings and workshops, and field visits. In the exchanges focusing on strengthening local governments in Morocco and Turkey with financial support through various programmes, learning occurred also through conferences and training courses whereby higher government levels could also be involved. There were no significant differences in the methods of exchanging knowledge between the Dutch-Moroccan and Dutch-Turkish partnerships, except for exchanging knowledge via email, which occurred more between the Netherlands and Turkey. Based on the findings it can be concluded that the exchange between municipalities was particularly relevant for providing opportunities for exchanging tacit and embedded knowledge. This confirms the results from other studies that argued that the exchange between practitioners is particularly relevant for sharing this kind of knowledge (Verkoren 2008; De la Rive Box 2001; Rip 2001).

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An example is the event ‘50 jaar Turkse Haarlemmer’ (the celebration of fifty years presence of citizens of Turkish descent in Haarlem). This event was organized in the framework of the celebration of 400 years diplomatic relations between the Netherlands and Turkey in 2012. NGO Haarlem-Emirdag organized the event and acquired a grant from the Turkish Embassy and a Dutch fund for promoting cultural activities (Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds). In addition the theatre and concert hall Philharmonie in Haarlem offered the accommodation at a reduced rate as the theatre was also interested to reach out to the Turkish population in Haarlem for business reasons (e.g., renting out the location for weddings). The Municipality of Haarlem did not provide funding for this event.
In Morocco and Turkey local governments mainly learned from embedded knowledge on service delivery and learning regarding processes. Especially working in partnerships with other non-governmental actors was important. This was particularly relevant because in both Morocco and Turkey governance processes have been traditionally centralized; the roles of local governments are slowly changing due to decentralization. Thus, the cooperation with Dutch local governments occurred at the appropriate time, when spaces were opening up and the local governments in Morocco and Turkey started to cooperate in partnerships with other actors at the local level. These findings confirm Bontenbal’s (2009a) argument that municipal partnerships have a potential to strengthen the interfaces between governmental and non-governmental actors. Exposure to another context was important for learning as participants were exposed to new ideas—learning through differences (Johnson and Wilson 2009a)—which increased their awareness about issues like the importance of environmental protection and methods for involving citizens in local governance processes. Visiting the partner municipality was also relevant to better understand the importance of the context and its influence on what they were learning. Adding to the scarce body of knowledge on learning by non-governmental actors in city-to-city partnerships, the results show that non-governmental actors in Morocco and Turkey indicated that learning practice-based knowledge through exposure to other practices was particularly relevant for creating awareness in their own communities (e.g. on environmental issues). Some of the forms of learning also occurred unintended.

In the Netherlands learning on cultural issues and ethnic and cultural diversity was important. The learning by NGOs was to a large extent comparable to the learning by local governments, whereby NGOs acquired particularly valuable new information about cultural issues. Earlier research on the potential benefits by municipalities in the Global North also referred to ‘soft’ benefits, like greater cultural awareness and mutual understanding (Johnson and Wilson 2006: 75); however, there is scarce empirical evidence of these forms of learning in municipalities in the Global North. The added value for the Dutch municipalities is the direct link the involved officials had with citizens of migrant origin. Interestingly learning from international exchanges was particularly relevant in the exchanges not supported by programmes and it was most notable in the cooperation with Morocco. The extent and forms of learning are summarized in the following table.
Table 6.9 Learning in Dutch-Moroccan and Dutch-Turkish municipal partnerships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms of learning</th>
<th>Morocco and Turkey</th>
<th>the Netherlands</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local governments</td>
<td>Civil society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practice-based embedded knowledge</td>
<td>Strong (especially on waste management)</td>
<td>Strong (especially on awareness raising)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization and processes</td>
<td>Strong (especially on working in partnerships)</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispositional learning (attitudes and values)</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning on cultural issues and diversity</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning on issues with a transnational dimension</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection on own work processes</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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The partnerships between the Dutch municipalities, on the one hand, and Moroccan and Turkish municipalities, on the other hand, have the added advantage of making use of migrants in facilitating processes of knowledge exchange when needed and building on their knowledge and networks. In a few cases migrants also contributed technical knowledge (e.g., the hazardous materials specialist of Turkish origin at the fire department of Amsterdam), which could not have been easily translated by people with no expert knowledge. These findings are particularly relevant, as there is still limited knowledge about the roles of migrants in international cooperation, particularly at the local government level and in terms of the knowledge they can contribute. The research shows that there should be realistic expectations about the potential to obtain expert knowledge from migrants, especially on governance arrangements. A risk of the involvement of migrants as translators included unintended dominance of the knowledge exchange processes. In a few cases the visiting Dutch experts felt left out and could not contribute fully, thus limiting the beneficial effects of the knowledge exchange.